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SUBJECT: MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME (MTCR) -- SMALL GROUP PROPOSALS FOR 2005 (C)

REF: SECSTATE 31851

Classified By: EST COUNSELOR ROBERT W. DRY FOR REASONS 1.4 (B), (D), and (H)

¶1. (C) On February 24, EST Counselor provided French MTCR Point-of-Contact David Bertolotti with non-paper contained reftel, noting the request for feedback; the need to limit discussion within the small group; and, the invitation to share small group proposals. Bertolotti said he would study the U.S. paper. He commented generally that he thought the issues presented by the U.S. side would be "less contentious" than last year's subjects.

¶2. (C) While Bertolotti noted the French side had yet to conduct its preparatory meeting for the RPOC, he felt that the French might be willing to mention "something on Iran," possibly comparing assessments. There might also be scope in the small group to review the Libyan request for membership. While there is no question that the request is "rather premature," the small group may wish to consider how to present the message to the Libyans. Bertolotti considers it particularly important for the MTCR group to act in a manner consistent with the disarmament process. There would be interest, he thought, in learning the U.S. assessment as to how well the Libyans are fulfilling their commitments in that regard. The small group might also want to discuss approaches to dealing with the Chinese membership application. It might be useful, Bertolotti added, to say something about "lessons learned" in the previous plenary session regarding Brazilian, South African, and Russian reaction to "initiatives" raised at the MTCR Seoul plenary.

¶3. (S) Another topic which might be ripe for discussion by the core group in early April according to Bertolotti is what he termed "the Ukrainian problem," referring to the alleged transfer of up to 20 nuclear-capable ballistic missiles to Iran and China in the 1999-2001 timeframe, a subject which apparently has only recently come to light. Bertolotti mentioned that the French and Germans plan to demarche the Ukrainians about this. He said that at this stage the French government had no reason to suspect the new regime in Kiev would not cooperate in the investigation of the alleged incident. He thought that it might be possible to engage the Ukrainians in a bilateral discussion on this topic.

¶4. (C) Finally, Bertolotti mentioned that there might be an opportunity to broaden discussion within the HCOC setting. He is cognizant of U.S. concerns not to duplicate MTCR work in the HCOC. However, Bertolotti suggests there may be some room for real world discussion in the HCOC on non-proliferation trends.

Wolff